

This resulted in Urban Indian Organizations struggling to provide accurate responses to changing public health decisions for Indians living in urban areas.

This bill would amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to require all agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services to establish an urban Indian organization confer policy.

I thank the sponsor of this legislation, Chairman GRIJALVA, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA), the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, as stated before, today marks the first day of National Native American Heritage Month.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico, the chair of the Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States, Ranking Member WESTERMAN, and Ranking Member YOUNG for putting a package together for Congress to vote specifically on significant bipartisan pieces of legislation that deal specifically with Indian Country. I think it is noteworthy and symbolic, and as you see these pieces of legislation, very much necessary. I want to extend my thanks to all of them for that.

While it is a time to celebrate the histories and achievements of Native Americans in this country, it is also a time for Congress to fully recognize the trust and treaty obligations the U.S. Government owes to Tribal governments and to indigenous people in our country.

Ensuring equity for Tribal healthcare entities is an essential part of the Federal trust responsibility, which is the reason that I am proud to sponsor H.R. 5221, the Urban Indian Health Confer Act.

The accessible and culturally competent healthcare services that Indian Health Services provides to Tribal communities are critical to ensuring their well-being.

As stated by the chairwoman, over 70 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives began seeking healthcare outside of Tribal jurisdictions in our cities and nonreservation communities across this country. Urban Indian Organizations, UIOs, were created to fill that gap.

Today, IHS supports 41 of these programs that offer vital medical services, including dental care, mental health support, optometry services, and social services, such as nutrition, education, and home healthcare.

Although UIOs have been recognized as critical components of the Tribal healthcare system, they continue to experience parity and recognition of purpose and the attention that they deserve for the services they provide to indigenous people and the family services they provide to nonreservation Native people across this country.

At the Department of Health and Human Services, only IHS maintains an obligation to confer with UIOs regarding any healthcare policy changes that may affect urban Indian communities. This issue became glaringly obvious during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Department excluded UIOs in the vaccine rollout discussions, leaving urban Indian communities among the last to receive vaccine allocations through their local urban Indian centers.

As a Member of Congress who represents a UIO, the Tucson Indian Center, I am grateful for their essential work to keep Tribal communities safe and healthy, especially as we go into a post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

H.R. 5221 will establish direct lines of communication between UIOs and the Department of Health and Human Services so that UIOs have a seat at the table for all relevant Tribal healthcare policy changes.

Ensuring that UIOs achieve equity at the Department is sound public health policy and upholds the U.S. Government's Federal trust responsibility to Indian Country. H.R. 5221 represents a much-needed change.

Madam Speaker, I urge the quick adoption of this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I am ready to close, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I want to, once again, thank Ranking Member WESTERMAN, as well as Ranking Member DON YOUNG and Chair GRIJALVA, for bringing forth this legislation. It addresses immediately something that we saw that had lingered, but the pandemic shown its ugly light on what happens when we let things linger and do not deal with them. This legislation fixes that. It highlights the importance of communication, of cooperation, and the confer policy that must be adopted across all of our agencies, not only at HHS.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5221.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

BEAR RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA STUDY ACT

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules

and pass the bill (H.R. 3616) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Bear River National Heritage Area, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3616

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Bear River National Heritage Area Study Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **HERITAGE AREA.**—The term "Heritage Area" means the Bear River National Heritage Area.

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(3) **STATES.**—The term "States" means the States of Utah and Idaho.

(4) **STUDY AREA.**—The term "study area" means—

(A) areas in the States that are within the main drainage area of the Bear River;

(B) all of Cache, Box Elder, and Rich Counties in the State of Utah, and Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin, and Oneida Counties in the State of Idaho;

(C) the following communities in Utah: Bear River, Brigham City, Corinne, Deweyville, Elwood, Fielding, Garland, Honeyville, Howell, Mantua, Perry, Plymouth, Portage, Snowville, Tremonton, Willard, Amalga, Clarkston, Cornish, Hyde Park, Hyrum, Lewiston, Logan, Mendon, Millville, Newton, Nibley, North Logan, Paradise, Providence, Richmond, River Heights, Smithfield, Trenton, Wellsville, Garden City, Laketown, Randolph, and Woodruff;

(D) the following communities in Idaho: Malad, Clifton, Dayton, Franklin, Preston, Oxford, Weston, Bancroft, Soda Springs, Grace, Bloomington, Paris, Georgetown, Montpelier, and St. Charles; and

(E) any other areas in the States that—

(i) have heritage aspects that are similar to the areas described in subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), or (D); and

(ii) are adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, those areas.

SEC. 3. STUDY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, in consultation with State and local organizations and governmental agencies, Tribal governments, non-profit organizations, and other appropriate entities, shall conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating the study area as a National Heritage Area, to be known as the "Bear River National Heritage Area".

(b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—The study shall include analysis, documentation, and determinations on whether the study area—

(1) has an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that—

(A) represent distinctive aspects of the people and cultures of the United States;

(B) are worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use; and

(C) would be best managed—

(i) through partnerships among public and private entities; and

(ii) by linking diverse and sometimes non-contiguous resources and active communities;

(2) reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklore that are a valuable part of the story of the United States;

(3) provides outstanding opportunities—

(A) to conserve natural, historic, cultural, or scenic features; and

- (B) for recreation and education;
- (4) contains resources that—
- (A) are important to any identified themes of the study area; and
- (B) retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;
- (5) includes residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and State, local, and Tribal governments, and other appropriate entities that—
- (A) are involved in the planning of the Heritage Area;
- (B) have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles of all participants in the Heritage Area, including the Federal Government; and
- (C) have demonstrated support for the designation of the Heritage Area;
- (6) has a potential management entity to work in partnership with the individuals and entities described in paragraph (5) to develop the Heritage Area while encouraging State and local economic activity;
- (7) could impact the rights of private property owners with respect to their private property; and
- (8) has a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report that describes—

- (1) the findings of the study under section 3; and
- (2) any conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3616, the Bear River National Heritage Study Act, introduced by my Natural Resources Committee colleague, Representative BLAKE MOORE.

H.R. 3616 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Bear River National Heritage Area.

The study area would include seven counties in northern Utah and southeastern Idaho, focusing on areas that are within the main drainage area of the Bear River.

Heritage area designations are locally driven initiatives that leverage Federal resources to support the preservation of shared heritage in a manner that boosts conservation, recre-

ation, and economic development. These shared stories are vital, as we consider what is the American story. These heritage centers have proven successful all over the country, and I am pleased to support this bill that will examine the potential of the Bear River region.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to ensure a successful and sustainable future for the entire Heritage Area program and would, again, like to congratulate Representative MOORE for championing this bill on behalf of his constituents.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I first want to thank Chairman GRIJALVA and Chairwoman LEGER FERNANDEZ for their cooperation in moving this bill forward.

H.R. 3616, offered by my colleague, Mr. MOORE of Utah, requires the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study assessing the suitability and feasibility of designating the Bear River National Heritage Area in northern Utah and southern Idaho.

The Bear River area straddles the Utah-Idaho border where the Great Basin and Rocky Mountains meet. It is home to the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, the Golden Spike National Historical Park, the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, the Hardware Ranch, numerous Latter-day Saints history sites, the Oregon Trail, and a strong agricultural economy and abundant natural beauty.

The Bear River area is a great candidate for study as a potential national heritage area, and this legislation enjoys strong local support.

I commend Congressman MOORE for his work on this legislation, and I urge adoption of the measure.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MOORE).

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee for his support of this legislation and also to my colleague from New Mexico, Representative LEGER FERNANDEZ, for her kind words of support and her support of the bill overall, as well as, most importantly, our committee staff. I thank them all very much.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3616, the Bear River National Heritage Area Study Act, which would conduct a study to determine the area's suitability for a national heritage area designation. This would help local communities in the area protect important elements of their heritage and promote the area's tourism industry.

This important bill enjoys significant local support and, if enacted, would help the region better share its incredible history with the world.

The Bear River basin, which stretches through northern Utah and southeastern Idaho, played a key role in the settling, expansion, and development of the American West.

Native American Tribes, such as the Shoshone, called this area home because of its lush environment and favorable weather. Today, with the construction of the Boa Ogoi Cultural Interpretive Center in southeastern Idaho, these stories will soon be told like never before.

Eventually, explorers and adventures, fur trappers, and religious pioneers also settled in the area and began to build homes. The region's natural water supply makes it ideal for farming, and it quickly became home to thriving frontier towns. Generations of family farms in northern Utah and southeast Idaho can trace their origins to these early days.

Later, the driving of the golden spike at Promontory Summit marked the completion of the transcontinental railroad, an element of pride for the entire area. This pivotal moment launched our great Nation onto the global stage and into the modern world.

Today, this special place is home to thriving communities that support jobs in the tech, agriculture, education, manufacturing, service, and tourism industries.

As we look backwards to retell the history of this region, these industries are looking forward to writing the next chapter of the Bear River basin's story.

I am grateful for Chairman GRIJALVA, Ranking Member WESTERMAN, Representative LEGER FERNANDEZ, and their fantastic staff for all their help on this effort.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting the Bear River National Heritage Area Study Act.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for bringing this to our attention, I urge adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I look forward to listening to the many interconnected and complex stories that will come out of this study and to perhaps visiting the heritage area in the near future. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3616.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

□ 1700

AUTHORIZING THE SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA TO LEASE OR TRANSFER CERTAIN LAND

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 108) to authorize the Seminole Tribe of Florida to lease or transfer certain land, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 108

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED TO VALIDATE CERTAIN LAND TRANSACTIONS OF THE SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, without further approval, ratification, or authorization by the United States, the Seminole Tribe of Florida may lease, sell, convey, warrant, or otherwise transfer all or any part of the interest of the Seminole Tribe of Florida in any real property that is not held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

(b) TRUST LAND NOT AFFECTED.—Nothing in this section—

(1) authorizes the Seminole Tribe of Florida to lease, sell, convey, warrant, or otherwise transfer all or any part of an interest in any real property that is held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Seminole Tribe of Florida; or

(2) affects the operation of any law governing leasing, selling, conveying, warranting, or otherwise transferring any interest in any real property that is held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, S. 108, introduced by Senator RUBIO of Florida, will allow the Seminole Tribe of Florida to lease, sell, convey, warrant, or transfer its real property that is not held in trust by the United States.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is a federally recognized Tribe with its Tribal headquarters located in Hollywood, Florida. It is one of three federally recognized Seminole entities, and many of its enrolled members reside on its six reservations in Florida.

In recent decades, a large portion of the Tribe's economic development strategy has been its investment in commercial real estate properties. So far the Tribe owns one of the largest cattle operations in the U.S., along with the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino franchise and its 74 international properties.

To manage the Tribe's growing portfolio, the Tribal Council established a commercial real estate investment fund to help create generational stability for the Seminole Tribe. Ultimately, the Tribe's hope is to establish a State-chartered subsidiary entity to act as a holding company for certain properties owned by the Tribe.

Unfortunately, the Tribe has been unable to move forward with this project due to concerns raised by lenders and proposed title insurance companies about the Indian Nonintercourse Act.

The act prohibits any "purchase, grant, lease, or other conveyance of lands, or of any title or claim thereto, from an Indian nation or Tribe of Indians" unless authorized by Congress.

At least two title insurance companies approached by the Tribe have interpreted the act to apply to real estate owned by a State-chartered subsidiary entity of the Tribe. As such, the title companies will not insure the mortgage without an exemption from the act, which in turn effectively kills any ability to finance an acquisition.

S. 108 will, therefore, provide relief from the Indian Nonintercourse Act by clarifying that the Seminole Tribe of Florida has the authority to lease, sell, convey, warrant, or otherwise transfer their interests in property not held in trust by the Federal Government without further approval from the Federal Government.

This bipartisan effort is led in the House by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO), who is the sponsor of the House companion bill. I congratulate him on his strong advocacy to get this legislation to the President's desk.

S. 108 will allow the Seminole Tribe the ability to continue its economic development, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman GRIJALVA and Chairwoman LEGER FERNANDEZ for working together on this bill. I rise in support of S. 108. It is a bill that authorizes the Seminole Tribe of Florida to lease or transfer certain land, and for other purposes.

As Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ described, this bill would exempt lands held in fee

by the Seminole Tribe of Florida from the limitations imposed by the Indian Nonintercourse Act, which restricts a Tribe from leasing or conveying any lands a Tribe owns without Federal approval.

The act has generated a great deal of confusion and litigation about whether a Tribe can buy, sell, or lease land that it owns. The bill states that the act does not authorize the Tribe to lease, sell, convey, warrant, or otherwise transfer all or any portion of any interest in any real property that is held in trust.

This bill was introduced in response to real estate investment issues encountered by the Seminole Tribe, since at least two title insurance companies would not grant the Tribe insurance.

The bill ensures that the act does not interfere with the ability to convey fee land owned by the Tribe, which would impede the Tribe's economic development activities and hinder job creation.

Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close. I urge adoption of the measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I am grateful for this bipartisan legislation. I also think it gives us a path forward on what we might need to do for all Tribes who encounter this issue, but for now I am very much in support of S. 108 and urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 108.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

OLD PASCUA COMMUNITY LAND ACQUISITION ACT

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4881) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona certain land in Pima County, Arizona, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4881

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Old Pascua Community Land Acquisition Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act: